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BOOK REVIEWS

SPURIOUS RESEARCH

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An analysis of the world alignment of forces and the changing pattern of this alignment unquestionably present considerable interest. Attempts to devise a system of indices for this purpose have been made many a time, particularly in the United States. Not long ago a second edition of a new book on this subject, "World Power Assessment. A Calculus of Strategic Drift," was published by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown University.*

Its author, Ray S. Cline, is an intelligence man with a 30-year record. From 1962 to 1966 he was CIA deputy director and subsequently moved to the Department of State as director of intelligence and research. Since 1973, Dr Cline has been executive director of studies at Georgetown University's Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

Ray Cline divides the world into 11 "polytectonic zones" according to the geographical location of a country and its general political orientation: North America; the Soviet Union and the other members of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (Mongolia excluded); China, Mongolia and the "communist regimes" in Indo-China and Korea; Western Europe; the Middle East; South Asia; Southeast Asia; Northeast Asia (Japan, Taiwan and South Korea); Latin America; Africa; Australia and New Zealand.

Such classification might be in place in a textbook of geography, but it is totally unsuitable for political analysis. It lumps together the West European members of NATO with Yugoslavia and Albania, the Arab countries with Israel, and the independent progressive states of Africa with the racist Vorster and Smith regimes.

To determine the power of a country Ray Cline assesses in points its population, area and economic and military strength. Then the points are added up and multiplied by a coefficient derived from the general evaluation of the "national strategy" and "national will." This method reveals the subjectivist judgment of the author.

First, correlation between the above-mentioned factors is established arbitrarily. The size of territory and population are evaluated by a five-point system, the gross national product by a 10-point, the possession of nuclear weapons (at the Soviet and U.S. levels) by a 15-point system, and so on. It is not clear, however, on what basis these systems were devised.

Second, the economic growth figures of socialist countries are underrated in the book. For instance, the Soviet Union's gross national product is estimated at half of the United States'. At the same time the figures relating to military power and military expenditure are overrated. Though Cline admits that "comparisons between U.S. and Soviet efforts are tricky" because of the difficulty of converting prices from one currency into another, he nevertheless talks about the Soviet Union's "rising level of expenditures on military programmes over the past ten years in contrast to the up-and-down U.S. record." Since it is not known how these data were computed the results of Cline's analysis seem dubious.

Third, in the final calculation Cline uses round figures, discounting the states whose power is estimated below seven points under his system. Hence the conclusion that the Asian, African and Latin American states exert little significant influence on the balance of forces. The author does not hesitate to doctor his figures in an effort to belittle the developing nations' role in present-day world affairs. The area, population and economic strength of the zones in which developed capitalist states predominate are estimated at 261 points and those of the developing nations, at 235. After the figures have been "rounded out" the ratio becomes 229 to 145. This means that the figure for the developed states is reduced by roughly 12 per cent and for the developing states, by 38.

The value of the study is depreciated still further, if not reduced to nil, by the use of "national strategy" and "national will" coefficients. The "strategy" implies the foreign-policy activity of a state aimed at achieving the "national goals," and the "will" is supposed to indicate the degree of public support for this strategy, the unity and determination of the people. Cline himself admits that this system is a "subjective judgment, nothing more." However, this is more than a subjective judgment.

Cline's method is fallacious because it equates the foreign policy of socialism with that of imperialism. Misrepresenting the aims and principles of Soviet foreign policy, he claims that its objective is to change the balance of forces through expansion, to "gain total strategic superiority over the United States" and ensure world hegemony for the Soviet Union. The Soviet policy of détente is viewed by Cline as a tactical manoeuvre.

To scare the reader and persuade him that the détente policy should be discarded and a more vigorous anti-communist strategy adopted, the author talks about the "vulnerability of the free world." In the concluding part of the book the data are tailored to achieve the desired result. The operation with "round figures" and the "strategy" and "will" coefficients are again used for this purpose. The correlation of Soviet and U.S. power, estimated at 45 and 50 points in the beginning, becomes 67.5 and 35 points after the coefficients have been used in the final evaluation.

The main factor weakening the United States, in Cline's view, is détente, which he describes as "a policy of placating enemies by... sees the alternative in going over to a policy of "continuous political and

* Ray S. Cline. "World Power Assessment. A Calculus of Strategic Drift." Washington, D.C. 1976.